

Issue 1 • 2019

# The Approach

Australia & New Zealand Edition



JOHN DEERE

ROYAL BIRKDALE PREPARES FOR THE LADIES BRITISH OPEN



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Open Royal Birkdale  
Golf Club, Southport,  
United Kingdom.

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# John Deere News

## Seven for Sawgrass

Seven members of BIGGA and GCSAI went to Ponte Vedra Beach in March to help prepare the Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass for The Players Championship. The successful seven selected to join the John Deere TPC Sawgrass Volunteer Programme 2019 included, representing the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association:

- **Scotland:** Darren Skinner, Castle Stuart Golf Links
- **North:** Jon Gamble, Welshpool Golf Club
- **Central England:** Matthew Shaul, Cleethorpes Golf Club
- **South West & South Wales:** Mark Simmons, Kingsdown Golf Club
- **South East:** Andy Copeland, Chesfield Downs Golf and Country Club
- **International:** Niels Sorensen, Randers Golf Klub, Denmark



In addition, Alex Newenham from Douglas Golf Club flew the flag for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Ireland.

This year the event returned to its traditional March timing after 12 years of being hosted in May. The shift was the result of a shuffle in the PGA Tour calendar and saw the greenkeeping team in 2019 undertake a new challenge compared to that of preparing the course in May.



Whereas by May the harder ground and Bermuda grass make for a very different playing style, in March the course is overseeded with cooler-season rye to ensure good playing conditions. Preparing the course earlier in the year was just one of the challenges the association members faced when they joined the home greenkeeping team and a volunteer course maintenance force of over 90.

More of the world's top players competed in this tournament than at any other venue throughout the year, leading to its unofficial title of the fifth men's major. In 2018, Webb Simpson secured the \$1.98m first prize with his tournament victory after tying the course record with a 63 in the second round.

Prior to the event, John Deere Limited turf division sales manager Chris Meacock said: "I would like to congratulate all the successful BIGGA and GCSAI members for winning through the selection process and earning a place on what will be our fifth annual TPC Sawgrass Volunteer Programme in 2019.

"The quality of applications that we receive each year is a true reflection of the high standards of greenkeeping and course management throughout the UK and Ireland. I know from the comments of past volunteers that this latest group will benefit greatly from the experience of being part of such a large, well-organised international greenkeeping team involved in the preparation of one of the world's top golf tournaments."

## Notts Hollinwell goes for green again



(Left to right) Notts Golf Club Hollinwell green chairman Nick Jones, John Deere Limited territory manager Nikki McKenzie, machinery/maintenance manager Peter Armson, James Robson of Henton & Chattell, course manager Phil Stain, Sam Russo of Henton & Chattell and club secretary/manager Martyn Bonner MBE.

Ranked as the UK's 40th best course by Golf World Top 100 and by National Club Golfer as an England Top 20 course, Notts Golf Club Hollinwell is renowned as one of the country's finest inland courses, with heather, gorse, bracken and pine in abundance.

It has also been described as "one of the best heathland courses in Britain" by BBC commentator and former Ryder Cup player Ken Brown. The club has continued the course and environmental improvements accomplished over recent years and for the second year running hosted a Final Qualifying tournament for The Open at Carnoustie in July 2018.

In 2017, Notts (Hollinwell) also successfully staged Final Qualifying for The Open at Royal Birkdale. The course was presented in excellent condition and the event ran very smoothly, thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of staff – not least the greenkeeping team led by course manager Phil Stain – members and volunteers.

"The club is always pushing for higher standards and there's been a lot of investment in the course over the last few years, so it's very satisfying to be recognised at this level," said Phil. "The course is now being managed more intensively and our bent/fescue overseeding programme is progressing really well, as we try to get the greens back to predominantly fine grasses. Mowing frequency has also been increased, so the reliability of our

course machinery continues to be a major requirement."

Part of the ongoing investment programme has seen the purchase of a new fleet of seven John Deere machines from Nottingham based dealership Henton & Chattell, on a John Deere Financial five-year operating lease. These include four 2500E electric Hybrid Triplex Greens Mowers, an 8800A TerrainCut™ Rotary Rough Mower featuring the programmable TechControl display, and two ProGator™ heavy-duty Utility Vehicles.

"The machines were due for replacement, as it had been five years since the last upgrade," said Phil. "We've been more than happy with our previous John Deere 2500E Greens Mowers, which were the first ones we bought. They've provided the standard of finish and reliability we look for, and the dealer service from Henton & Chattell and sales manager James Robson has been very good.

"We always choose the best machines for the job, in our opinion, so we're not particularly committed to one individual brand over any other. However, having

tried the competition we found the John Deere greens mowers ticked all the boxes, so we had no reason to change – we've had virtually no problems with them whatsoever, so there was no need to look elsewhere. All round the 2500E is a very good, reliable machine – our old models still have plenty of life in them and are going back to the dealer in very good condition.

"The 8800A cuts all the semi-rough and provides a massive time saving, as well as a good quality finish, plus it's also a very reliable mower. The ProGators are new machines for us, as we've only had them on demonstration before. The industry feedback I get is that the Gator is one of the most robust machines out there, so I'm very happy to go with the opinions of other greenkeepers that I trust."

### STOP PRESS

**Notts Hollinwell is delighted to have been appointed again by the R&A to host Final Open Qualifying on July 2, 2019 for the 148th Open at Royal Portrush in July.**



# John Deere fleet boosts multi-use golf facility in beach paradise



ABOVE: Parkwood Golf Course  
BELOW: 1200A Bunker & Field Rake

RIGHT: 2500E E-Cut™ Hybrid

Colin Thorsborne manages a golf course in an area that was part of his childhood stomping ground, where he recalls playing and riding trail bikes long before it was developed.

With his guidance and recent investment by management, it's now not just any golf course on the Gold Coast and is growing its reputation.

Parkwood Golf Course is a par 70 championship course situated 3km inland from Southport and near Australia's famous Surfers Paradise Beach.

Last year Colin, the course superintendent, led the course to change its entire turf management fleet to John Deere mowers and turf sprayers, to lift the standard of its greens, surrounds and fairways, over the 5600 metre course.

It's part of an ongoing programme to diversify, modernise and improve The Club at Parkwood's golfing facilities.

A course that had become run down by 2010, The Club at Parkwood is now a flourishing multi-use family-friendly facility with a conference and wedding centre, restaurant, children's jump park, public gym, mini golf, sports medical precinct and is home to Queensland's National Rugby League team, the Titans.

Keeping the golf course to a high standard is important says Colin, who's managed various resort style golf courses, warm and cool season greens and been involved in course construction during his career.

The change to John Deere came about as part of Club Parkwood's four-yearly review of its machinery.

“We needed a company that could meet our supply and service programme” and he says in 2018 John Deere won the tender process “by a long shot.”



Club Parkwood uses two John Deere 2500E E-Cut Hybrid Triplex Mowers for greens and a 2500B for tees, green surrounds and renovation works. These are an upgrade from the previous mowers and the diesel powered 2500E is showing considerable fuel savings. Colin estimates they use only 60% of the previous machines fuel use.

“That's a big thing when operating on a limited budget and with a small crew, with six staff to look after an 18-hole golf course, an NRL football training field and all the landscape. We need machines that are efficient.”

“The ProGator™ and HD200 Sprayer is very well suited to all areas of the golf course and is much more efficient when spraying pesticides or foliar fertiliser over larger areas such as fairways. On these wide open areas it used to take quite a few tank loads.”

Colin says mowing time on fairways has also been reduced. “We can now use those hours on different areas to keep up the presentation of the course.”

“It is not always about the amount of fuel you are using, it is also the time efficiency and the quality cut.”

The quality cut on the greens, surrounds, tees and fairways has improved.”

Colin's team noticed improved results from the change to John Deere, and that's been backed by the members. “The first thing they have said is the cut of those machines is unbelievable,” he says.

“We have had quite a few previous members returning to our club.” Colin puts that down to the ongoing improvements in course quality, which the John Deere equipment has been a big part of.

“It's all about quality presentation for the golfers.”

The Club Parkwood John Deere fleet also has a 9009A Terrain Cut™ Wide Area Trim, Rough and Surrounds Mower for the majority of the rough area, two 7700A PrecisionCut™ Fairway Mowers, a 1200A Bunker & Field Rake, and a 1570 Rough Mower.

Colin says he's enjoying returning to John Deere machines after first using them 20 years ago. We're finding that what we set the mowers at is exactly what we get.”



“You get a true height of cut with all the machines.”

They are also impressed with the versatility of the John Deere machines. “When required we can change various cutting settings on the mowers with the ease of a touch pad and that helps us get through the cutting quite easily.”

Parkwood has used John Deere's finance package to change over its fleet and has support from its Chesterfield Australia Dealership 20 minutes away.

Colin says the transition has gone very smoothly. “Everything was looked after from the John Deere sales staff from the signing of the contracts to the delivery of the machinery. Even the post-sales support and onsite staff training was very good as well.”

“Chesterfield Australia has it set up really well. Their personnel look after every part of their operation from spare parts to warranty issues and servicing very professionally. If we need any help they are there to help us.”

It's been a tough 10 years for the many golf courses on the Gold Coast, with some falling on hard times and closing their doors but Club Parkwood has diversified its property and is dedicated to seeing the golf facilities become sustainable for the long term.

Colin is thankful he's part of the journey with this club on the rise. “To come to a little old run down Parkwood golf course and be able to lift it up to such a good standard it has been very satisfying. I'm lucky I have owners that trust my judgement to make decisions.”

And with Colin's careful eye and management of his fleet of John Deere machines to keep it presented to a high standard, Club Parkwood is set to become an even more sought after golf destination for members and visitors.



# John Deere fleets reign in Spain



## Real Club de Golf Las Brisas

Real Club de Golf Las Brisas at Marbella in Spain celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018, as well as its first full golf course maintenance equipment fleet deal with John Deere and local dealer Agronimer.

Arranged through David Fernandez, the head of Agronimer's golf division, the new fleet was acquired in a five-year John Deere Financial agreement worth one million euros, and is supported by full PowerGard maintenance cover. Machinery includes tees, fairway, greens and rough mowers, both compact and larger utility tractors, Gator™ Utility Vehicles, sprayers and bunker rakes. The latest E-Cut™ Hybrid electric models now make up 100 per cent of the club's ride-on greens and fairway mower fleet.

Originally created by Robert Trent Jones Sr and more recently redesigned by Kyle Phillips, the 18-hole course was ranked #6 in Spain and #37 in continental Europe's top 100 courses for 2018. It is notable for its raised greens, numerous bunkers and water hazards, as well as the botanical garden style landscaping that features many rare species of plants and trees from all over the world.

Las Brisas general manager Paul Muñoz and course manager Rafael González-Carrascosa head up a team of 24

greenkeeping and workshop staff. They have overseen an ambitious five-year multi-million euro project to redesign and renovate the course, which was necessary because the original design had begun to show its age.

"We felt that a complete remodelling of the golf course was required, but we needed to get the members to agree the necessary investment," said Paul Muñoz. "A first phase was approved to renovate some aspects of the front nine back in 2012, and it was then that the project gained credibility and members felt that further investment was necessary.

"The final phase of works on the back nine holes was completed in 2015 but then had to be redone after severe flooding in 2016 caused widespread damage, and the course had to be closed for three months. However, once the membership saw what could be achieved they very quickly moved to have the whole course upgraded, and the final three holes were finished last

summer.

"Everything has been addressed, from improving the grasses, bunkers, tees and greens to the drainage and irrigation system, as well as relocating several holes to create a better flow of play – even down to redesigning and rerouting the cart paths to make the initial visitor experience more pleasant.

"As a disciple of Robert Trent Jones Sr, Kyle Phillips fully understands his design philosophy, so he was the natural choice of architect for the new design, which is now cleaner, more open and natural. He has maintained the essence of the old course, but brought it more up to date, so it's a better experience for the golfer. When you play the course now it feels like it's been here for years, and you realise what a great job he's done."

Rafael González-Carrascosa added: "This new agreement with John Deere and Agronimer includes not only the purchase of all the equipment necessary to keep our course in perfect condition, but also continuous training programmes for the operators and mechanics, customised parts management and tournament support when required.

"One of the key factors in choosing John Deere was that we only had to deal with one supplier, one brand and one dealer offering the right finance deal, so it made things easier all round. The John Deere range is comprehensive and offers good quality engineering as well as reliable dealer service and support.

"We're confident we've made an excellent choice. Most importantly, the members are really happy with the improvements we've made and the way the course now plays."



Real Club de Golf Las Brisas and John Deere staff with the new John Deere course maintenance equipment fleet. Drone video footage of the fleet line-up can be found on the Real Club de Golf Las Brisas website and on YouTube.



## PGA Catalunya Resort



PGA Catalunya Resort near Girona in Spain signed its first ever five-year preferred equipment supplier agreement with John Deere to provide a fleet of 10 new Gator utility vehicles, as part of a three-year investment plan.

The European Tour Destination, renowned for its commitment to first-class course maintenance, had already been using John Deere 2500E Hybrid Electric Triplex Greens Mowers, 9009A TerrainCut™ Rotary Rough Mowers, 2030A ProGator Utility Vehicles equipped with HD200 low-profile amenity turf sprayers and TX Turf Gators.

The new five-year deal, supported by John Deere Financial and including PowerGard maintenance cover, saw the addition of two more ProGator vehicles and three rough mowers to the fleet, as well as two compact tractors, supplied by local dealer Ramon Font of Vernis & Taberner Equips, SL.

"Being home to Spain's number one course since 2011, expectations on how our courses play, look and feel are high, so the machinery we need must produce a consistent, first-class finish – and in John Deere's equipment we have well-engineered and reliable machinery, which our mechanics appreciate," said Alfredo Alvarez, Stadium course manager at PGA Catalunya Resort. "The greens staff really like the mowers' quality of cut and the precision that can be achieved using the programmable TechControl display."

Alvarez works alongside Tour course manager Roger Casadevall and head greenkeeper Aleix Masferrer, heading up a team of 21 greenkeepers and two mechanics who maintain the two championship courses to the highest standard.

"Following the Continental European course listing by www.top100golfcourses.com, we discovered the judging panel had specifically commented on the 'immaculate conditioning' of the Stadium course – and thanks to John Deere's superior turfcare machinery, we will uphold our course conditioning



standards to the highest level," said David Bataller, PGA Catalunya Resort's director of golf operations.

This investment in the future of the resort's two championship courses is part of a €53 million redevelopment programme that has seen the opening of two new hotels, the addition of a new vineyard, sports and leisure facilities and a wide range of services and activities since 2016. A new equestrian centre and a man-made recreational lake will complete the estate's transformation into one of Europe's most desirable luxury lifestyle destinations at less than an hour from Barcelona and 15 minutes from the historic town of Girona in north-eastern Spain.

TOP: PGA Catalunya Resort in Spain signed its first ever five-year preferred equipment supplier agreement with John Deere in 2017.

INSET: A John Deere 9009A TerrainCut™ Rotary Rough Mower at work on the course.





# Hybrids halve fuel costs at prestigious Clearwater course



ABOVE: Clearwater Golf Course

Moving to use the entire John Deere hybrid range of turf machinery at New Zealand's renowned Clearwater Golf Course and Resort has improved its already exceptional greens and fairways, all while halving its fuel costs for managing them.

A par 72 championship course awarded best New Zealand golf course at the World Golf Awards in 2015, Clearwater is a picturesque course that meanders around a series of trout-filled spring-fed lakes and streams, and from its Christchurch setting has spectacular views of the Southern Alps.

In 2013 it was the first golf course in Australasia to fully commit to using exclusively John Deere hybrid technology for its entire turf management fleet.

Course Manager Ryan Adams estimates the club is saving thousands of dollars a year in fuel costs. Further to that, the once common noise complaints from course residents have dried up, and he's not losing sleep with worry about potential oil leaks onto his greens.

Ryan's been working at Clearwater since its inception 2002. With his team he's charged with keeping the 70 hectares of rough and fairway in prime condition for year round golfing.

In 2005 the club changed its entire course management fleet to John Deere machinery on a John Deere Financial plan.

Ryan says the move six years later to a fleet of 20 John Deere hybrid machines and mowers immediately showed incredible diesel fuel cost savings.

Clearwater uses the John Deere 8000A E-Cut™ Hybrid and 7500A E-Cut Hybrid Fairway Mowers, the John Deere 2500 E-Cut Hybrid Riding Greens Mower and John Deere 220 E-Cut Hybrid Walk Greens Mowers.

"I am running an electronic system which records the exact literage going into and out of the machine – it sends me emails every day - so I can keep a full record of it."

**"On average we have a 40% reduction in diesel usage in our machines, and for the fairway mowers it is 50%."**

"The hybrid mowers use around 30 litres per cut, compared to the previous mowers which used approximately 70 litres of diesel per cut."

During the growth season Clearwater cuts greens daily and cuts fairways, tees and approaches three to four times a week. The hybrid turf machinery has bought a saving of approximately 120 litres of diesel per week, Ryan explains.

Ryan says noise control was a key driver when he was looking to move to the hybrid machines, due to the many residents

who live by the fairways and greens. Clearwater has 100 residential homes on the property.

Every day green keepers are preparing the course at 5.30am for the first members on course at 6.30am, and on tournament days green cutting begins at 4am!

He says prior to the switch to hybrids noise complaints from residents were common. "My email and phone were pretty quick to go off when we had events because we would be out there cutting at 4 in the morning. Since we have had the e-gear we have not heard from them."

**"And while the board has been rapt with the fuel savings, they've also got first hand positive feedback from residents about how quiet the new machines are."**



"At the first AGM after we got the hybrids a few residents came and stood up and congratulated the club for going down the e-route. It is very satisfying."

On top of that Ryan, who'd run the original John Deere fleet at Clearwater for 11 years before moving to hybrids, also rates the cut better. "The quality of the cut (with John Deere hybrids) is actually superior as well, so it was a win win for the board."

Another key benefit, he says, is the peace of mind that the machines won't have an oil leak, because the 'real circuit' driving the cutting units is electric rather than hydraulic.

"You always get the odd surprise leak (with non-hybrid machines) and the grass is literally dead within hours if you have a hydraulic leak," he says.

"When you are hosting events you want to remove and minimise these things from the equation. Not having to stress and worry about having a hose blow is a huge relief for us. It really makes you sleep better at night, especially leading up to a tournament."

Ryan says Clearwater has good support from its John Deere dealer, Drummond and Etheridge, based just 20 minutes from the course. "We can get parts and stock immediately if we have a surprise issue. If they don't have what we need, Melbourne has a large range of all the parts and can get them to us pretty quickly."

The Drummond and Etheridge mechanic is also on hand to help out the Clearwater team if his expertise is required for specific machines.

Ryan says he would recommend to other golf course managers who are looking at changing their machines to try John Deere hybrids.

"It is definitely the way to go. Another advantage with the John Deere gear is that a lot of the components are interchangeable (with the non-hybrid machines). If you were to have a breakdown with a mower you can exchange componentry from an existing machine."

Described by former World No 1 Lydia Ko in 2015 as "One of the best courses I played all year", Ryan says the John Deere machinery is a key part to Clearwater maintaining its exceptional reputation and award winning standards going into the future.

**"We have never looked back since we moved to John Deere and going forward we will continue to use the e-gear."**



ABOVE: Range of mowers used at Clearwater  
LEFT: 2500E E-Cut mowing Clearwater Golf Course



# Three perfect cuts: grass, fuel and noise

With industry-leading technology, the John Deere E-Cut™ Hybrid Fairway Mower is the ideal solution for your course requirements.

No hydraulic lines to the cutting units means there is practically no risk of leakage and individual electric reel controllers for consistent reel speeds deliver a consistent high-cut quality. Lower throttle settings mean higher fuel efficiency and reduced noise levels.

To find out more about the full range of John Deere Golf equipment contact your local John Deere Golf dealer today or visit [JohnDeere.com.au/golf](http://JohnDeere.com.au/golf) or [JohnDeere.co.nz/golf](http://JohnDeere.co.nz/golf)







# Middle Eastern promise

A major investment in John Deere golf course maintenance equipment has been made by the brand new Education City Golf Club in Doha, Qatar, which is due to open fully for play in 2019. The machinery will be used on three courses, with a total of 33 holes spread across 120ha.

Education City Golf Club is a landmark project for Qatar and the world of golf, offering a revolutionary and holistic approach to growing the game of golf. The facility features three golf courses including an 18-hole championship course, a floodlit 6-hole championship course and a floodlit 9-hole par 3 course, all designed by two-time US Masters winner and 2012 Ryder Cup winning captain Jose Maria Olazabal. It also comprises a range of short game formats, a state-of-the-art learning and practice facility housed in the Centre of Excellence and a TrackMan driving range.

Uniquely the 6-hole championship course has seven tee options per hole for quick and multi-generational golf, as part of the club's role in supporting the game's development and encouraging its growth in the region. The golf courses are serviced by a clubhouse and academy building, which will both offer all-day dining options. Surrounding the clubhouse are large gardens where a number of lawn sports will also be available, including footgolf, frisbee golf and croquet.

The facility will be maintained by golf course superintendent Darren Smith and deputy superintendent Andrew Ikstrums. An initial fleet of 93 John Deere machines including tractors, greens, fairway & rough mowers and

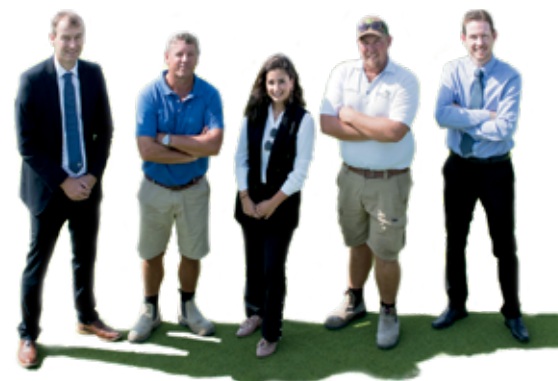
Gator™ Utility Vehicles has been delivered by Qatar dealer Progressive, along with other ancillary equipment including sprayers, top dressers and aerators. The choice of John Deere as preferred supplier to Education City Golf Club was made on Darren Smith's recommendation, following an intensive examination of the equipment's technical and environmental features.

In line with the club's sustainability vision, John Deere was considered a perfect match due to the hybrid electric technology used on over 90 per cent of the mowing fleet. Precision and quality were also key considerations in the decision making process, as Education City aims to present a premium experience to its members and guests.

Seif Al Ghaly, Managing Director of Progressive, John Deere's official supplier in Qatar, said: "As the exclusive dealer for John Deere agriculture & turf equipment in the region, Progressive Trading is proud and honoured to supply Education City Golf Club for the first time with our largest ever fleet of golf and utility equipment, to cater for the maintenance of this prestigious project.

"We are committed to providing first class products and service from our well trained and dedicated team of employees, with the full support, back-up and experience of the international John Deere business."

Education City Golf Club's General Manager Michael Braidwood added: "Our core product is the golf course and therefore it must be presented in immaculate condition. The equipment has been carefully selected to ensure an excellent guest and member experience. John Deere products are aligned to our vision in sustainability and to supporting our environmental initiatives in reducing fuel and waste. Furthermore, John Deere invests worldwide in education and training, which is another of our core values, and we look forward to a successful long-term partnership with the company."



**ABOVE RIGHT:** Education City Golf Club general manager Michael Braidwood, golf course superintendent Darren Smith, business development manager Leen Al Ghaly of John Deere dealer Progressive, deputy golf course superintendent Andrew Ikstrums and Education City's director of golf Rhys Beecher. **BELOW:** Members of the 45-strong maintenance team and part of the new John Deere machinery fleet.



## Killeen Castle invests in the future

Noel Bennett and director Robert Mitchell of John Deere dealer Dublin Grass Machinery with (centre) Killeen Castle course superintendent Mark Collins and his greenkeeping team (seated behind on the new John Deere machines).



Killeen Castle Golf Club in Co Meath, Ireland is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2019, as well as its recent investment in a state of the art golf course equipment fleet deal with John Deere and local dealer Dublin Grass Machinery worth over €500,000, with finance arranged through Deere's partner Bank of Ireland.

The machinery acquisition represents a significant investment on the part of Killeen Castle in the future of the Jack Nicklaus Signature Course, as the club enters its second decade of golf operations. The championship golf course opened in 2009 and was described by the 18-time Major winner and course designer as "one of my proudest designs".

The upgraded equipment fleet includes tees, fairway, greens and rough mowers, utility tractors, Gator Utility Vehicles, sprayers, top dressers and bunker rakes – with the latest John Deere E-Cut hybrid electric mowers now playing an important part in future-proofing the work of course superintendent Mark Collins and his team.

Killeen Castle has hosted The 2011 Solheim Cup between Europe and USA in addition to three Ladies Irish Opens from 2010 to 2012. The 630-acre estate also features a number of signature residential properties, The Dave Pelz Scoring Game

School, Fore Golf Custom Club Fitters and a Norman castle dating back to 1181.

The castle will become the focal point of the estate following a recent grant of planning permission for a 177-room luxury hotel, including the renovation and restoration of the original structure which will house 17 suites and a number of luxury dining rooms. The new three-storey structure partnering this renovation will incorporate 160 rooms, a day spa, function rooms and a winter garden restaurant.

The investment in new equipment also included an upgrade and enhancement of the club's rental golf cars and trolleys to the latest state of the art GPS units, as well as re-kerbing of the entire clubhouse compound. This was in addition to significant works around the golf course and peripheral areas to enhance the sanding and drainage profile of the course, all designed to ensure championship standard golfing conditions

for members and visitors alike all year round.

"There were many key factors in choosing John Deere equipment," said Mark Collins. "The relationship with Dublin Grass Machinery and sales manager Noel Bennett was high up the list, along with the excellent technical and back-up service provided for the past 12 years. The quality of John Deere machinery is quite simply second to none, and the company's advances in technology with the hybrid electric mowers made the decision an easy one. The overall package will allow us to continue to improve our work practices and deliver even better standards of course presentation to our members and guests."



Originally designed by Old Tom Morris, Ladybank Golf Club is a rare thing in Fife, enjoying as it does a reputation as one of the finest inland layouts in Scotland and providing a classic heathland test to lovers of golf away from the sea.

## High standards maintained at **Ladybank**

Recently ranked #2 in Great Britain's Top 100 Courses under £100 by *National Club Golfer* magazine, Ladybank is established on the Fife Open Championship Qualifying Trail, and has hosted final qualifying on seven occasions since 1978 for The Open Championship played at St Andrews. It was also a qualifying venue for last July's Senior Open Championship on the Old Course.

Managing secretary Gordon Simpson joined the club three years ago and carried out a comprehensive assessment of the whole club and course set-up. He knew the course and its quality from playing regularly in qualifying tournaments as a PGA professional, and immediately recognised that the combination of an ageing machinery fleet and increasing repair bills meant a replacement policy needed to be implemented.

Gordon therefore asked the six-strong greenkeeping team led by course manager Colin Powrie and head greenkeeper David Gray to put together a wish list of new machinery from scratch, that would help them to maintain the golf course to the required high standard. As a result, the club made its first ever John Deere fleet purchase, with equipment supplied by John Deere dealer Double A of Cupar in Fife.

The new machines include a 7500A Fairway Mower with TechControl display and smaller QA5 cutting units, a 4049R Compact Utility Tractor, a ProGator™ Utility Vehicle equipped with an HD200 low-profile amenity turf sprayer and two 220SL Walk-behind Greens Mowers.

"We conducted the usual tender process and gave the different manufacturers a list of the priority kit we required to replace the older machines," said Gordon. "Double A and the dealership's golf specialist John Bateson were superb throughout the process, both in supplying demonstration machines during 2017 and in their overall level of service, support and advice to help us

develop the golf course in the way we wished.

"The process was admittedly a lengthy one but the ongoing feedback we had from the membership was invaluable to me in the decision-making process, particularly with regard to the high levels of presentation and finish right across the course. This ultimately showed us that the quality of cut from the John Deere machines was far superior and sharper looking."

"We have quite undulating fairways, so

**"With all the work they put into the tender, John Deere and Double A simply stood out a mile."**

the smaller QA5 cutting units on the fairway mower suit our terrain very well by getting easily into the dips and hollows," added Colin Powrie. "The new hand mowers are used on the 1st and

18th tees and the collars, so these are now nicely striped up for better presentation."

Gordon Simpson admits John Deere would not have been his original number one choice, having never done a deal with the company before in his previous roles. However, he is now happy to state that everything the club experienced over the 20-month process of choosing a new supplier proved that he wanted to partner with John Deere as a brand and Double A as a local business.

"With the volume of kit that had to be replaced, it was always the case that the club would need to spread the investment over several years to make it more manageable," said Gordon. "With all the work they put into the tender, John Deere and Double A simply stood out a mile, and we knew this was the manufacturer and dealer we wanted to partner with."

"We were looking for a long-term relationship with our supplier, which is why it took us so long to make the decision, but we certainly feel that we've picked the right route for us and our ambitions for the club."



Course manager Colin Powrie and head greenkeeper David Gray of Ladybank Golf Club (left & right) with John Deere dealer Double A golf specialist John Bateson and the new John Deere course maintenance equipment fleet.

## John Deere Golf Dealer support network

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